

BUDGET COMMITTEE

JANUARY 29, 2008

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

The following are to be considered draft minutes only until approved by the Board at their next meeting.

Present: B. Manning, Ken Jacques, John Trachy, Jon Poston, Bill Sullivan, Darrin Patten, Dave Tucker and Rick Kidder. Robert Anderson was absent.

Selectmen present: John Chiarella and Neal Huntoon.

Others present: Leigh Callaway, Richard Kipperman and Nancy Watkins.

B. called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The roll was called.

Minutes: John Trachy moved to accept the January 15, 2008 minutes as written, seconded by Ken Jacques and unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: The Board reviewed total receipts reported by the Treasurer. John Trachy stated he would like to see a comparison report of past and present revenue projections. He was interested in knowing the amount of unpaid taxes.

Review of unreserved fund balance: The unreserved fund balance is \$319,654. \$112,000 was used to reduce the tax rate. The 2007 unreserved fund balance will not be known until an audit has been completed later this year. The amount retained is within the suggested levels recommended by the State at approximately 9%. The selectmen do not anticipate using any fund balance to offset 2008 budget appropriations, choosing to retain the balance to offset taxes if needed.

Proposed Warrant Articles:

The Board reviewed the Warrant Article for the fire truck. The amortization schedule for Lake Sunapee Bank was reviewed. The Selectmen are recommending a five-year term, at a rate of 3.9%. There will be a Bond Hearing at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 5th, prior to the Public Hearing of the Budget Committee.

Warrant Article for signs: Review of the article by the Board. John Chiarella explained the Communications Committee has recommended two signs to be placed at two locations on Route 114. The cost is \$2,000 each. He explained that the signs would be carved on dense foam board, mounted on posts. The Highway Department would assist in the installation. The Board of Selectmen had concerns regarding the costs, and working with the committee they agreed on a compromise to ask for two signs this year. They originally requested 5 signs. The Selectmen agreed to bring the Warrant to the Budget Committee.

John Trachy explained signs were discussed with the voters at last year's Town Meeting and the committee was asked to come back to Town Meeting with a proposal. Bill Sullivan stated this proposal is reasonable and should be left to the judgment of the voters. The Selectmen indicated this article is being placed on the warrant to allow the voters to decide.

Warrant Article for interest income for the Library: This is a housekeeping issue only. The article allows the Library Trustees to retain any interest earned on the money they receive from the annual budget.

Review of Budget Appropriations: The Selectmen reviewed appropriations that were not known at the last budget meeting.

Computer Support: John Chiarella explained the deficits with the existing computer hardware configuration. The system is unstable and many work hours are lost due to the system being unavailable and the time and effort needed to get the system running again. The proposal is to purchase a server and reconfigure the system to have an actual networked system. A server will also provide hardware to do routine back ups of data on one back up system. The proposal includes system support and technical administration.

Leigh Callaway, a resident of Springfield, was introduced. He has been working with Brandt Denniston, and office staff, to determine computer needs. Mr. Callaway has also volunteered to work with the Town Departments to write a disaster recovery plan. He stated that backups exist, but are done on three different media types. These backup types are not useful. Bringing in new hardware will allow for one backup platform. The hardware will also make this a more stable environment. System administration will provide support and will provide routine preventative maintenance and necessary troubleshooting. A new computer will be purchased for the Town Clerk, to allow replacement of an old, unstable work station with an obsolete operating system. This will be done in line with State Municipal Agent requirements to allow for the Town Clerk's office to eventually become a Municipal Agent for the State. Costs of the package and security of data were discussed. This system does not add new software applications, but a hardware platform to better support the needs of the office. Productivity of the office was discussed. John Chiarella stated that two vendors have been contacted for estimates, and both estimates are similar. John Trachy questioned what the future capital expenditures might be for this platform. Mr. Callaway stated that there should be no large hardware costs for at least 2-3 years, and the server should be adequate for 5-6 years.

John Chiarella stated he and Neal had begun a very informal list of future capital expenditures for the next several years.

Audit: The Board reviewed comparison of audit costs prepared by the Town of New London for a study they had done. The DRA recommends an audit firm or a CPA firm to perform audits, versus an elected auditor. Neal stated he has spoken to the audit firm. The information the auditors are being asked to provide has increased, creating the increase in the audit costs.

Transfer Station: The Board reviewed documents provided by the Town of Sunapee. John Chiarella stated Donna Nashawaty, Sunapee Town Manager, and Tony Bergeron, Road Agent met with the Selectmen. They reviewed their success with recycling and the costs associated with running the transfer station. Springfield's population now makes up 25% of the population of Sunapee's, so the percentage being requested from Springfield is now 25% versus 20%, which is reflected in raised costs. John Chiarella explained the new possibilities that are being reviewed for recycling. There should be money coming back to the Towns in 2009 from the NH/VT Solid Waste District. When and how much is still unknown, but Springfield's portion will be 25% and will be used to offset future transfer station operating costs for Springfield.

Darrin stated there should be more money appropriated for house numbering to renumber Route 114. He has spoken to Selectmen several times about the difficulty with Route 114 being divided up into three sections. Emergency Personnel have difficulty responding to a correct address because there could be three of the same number along Route 114 as it is numbered as Grantham Road, Main Street, and New London Road. Route 114 was established after the 911 numbering system was in place, and many residents don't know their correct physical address. John Chiarella stated that at the recent Hazard Mitigation meeting, Jeremy LaPlante from the NH Department of Homeland Security was present and indicated that the State will come in and do mapping and renumbering through grant funding. The Town would be responsible to send out mailings to residents and to hold public hearings.

MRI Audit. Casual Labor costs were reviewed. Municipal Resources has given an estimate for costs associated with implementing revenue tracking through the accounting software system.

Engineering: Neal reported the Selectmen are requesting an amount to provide for engineering at the Highway/Fire site. The possibility of locating a Police Department on that site has been reviewed. The entire site needs to be looked at in terms of septic needs, drainage, and wetlands. Replacement and relocation of the salt shed has been discussed. Neal stated that Ross Stevens felt the leach field was adequate to accommodate a washer in the fire station. Ross indicated that a separate septic tank might be required.

Police Department: Tim Julian, Chief, met with the Board and provided information regarding tasers. Dave Tucker stated he supported the request for the Police Department to purchase tasers.

Fire Department: Dallas Patten, Chief, met with the Board and provided more information regarding the washing machine. The washer uses 28 to 32 gallons per use, and can wash up to two sets of gear at a time. Regular laundry detergent is used. Several of the Towns these washers have been sold to have leach fields, and there have been no problems.

Budget members reviewed total proposed operating costs. The budgetary increases were discussed at length. Removing reclamation from the Highway Budget for this year was discussed as an option. The Board discussed what items could be reduced without creating hardships for departments

The Board addressed concerns regarding potential environmental impact from a washing machine for turn out gear. Other options were discussed.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Roberts,
Administrative Assistant